

soul of honour, the father of his people, the friend as well as the master of the greatest of his servants. It is not the ruler, however, but the Minister of Foreign Affairs who is the flawless hero of the drama. In the whole range of political autobiography there is nothing to surpass the massive complacency of Mettemich's apologia.^{6e} The only way for a conscientious man to resist the storms of the time," he wrote, "is by the formula *La vräte force, fest h' droit*" He always defined his "system," as he fondly called it, as *Le Drottpar la force*. He presents himself throughout his long life not only as the champion but as the infallible interpreter of right. His devoted son, the Austrian Ambassador at Paris during the closing years of the Second Empire, felt confident that the *Memoirs and Correspondence* would confound the enemies of the Chancellor and revive his fame. He was mistaken, for self-glorification was carried to a point which provoked an inevitable reaction.

"For himself," writes Sorel with just severity, "he is the light of the world ; he dazzles himself with his own rays in the mirror, which he holds perpetually before his eyes," He and Chateaubriand, he adds, are "les deux plus grands infatués du siècle." In a conversation with Thiers in old age Mettemich blandly affirmed that he had never made a mistake, to which the French statesman modestly replied that he could not say as much for himself. When he boasts "Je n'ai pas une heure pour moi," our thoughts turn to Caroline Murat, Mme Junot, Mme de Lieven and many other mistresses.

Now that we look to political apologies not for impartial history but above all for a revelation of personality, this calm assumption of infallibility in no way diminishes the interest

and importance of the work. For Mettemich was a master of diplomacy and a great European if not a great statesman. It is indeed a fascinating record of the long duel between the Corsican adventurer and the high priest of legitimism, the Revolution on horseback and the guardian of tradition. Educated at Strassburg and Mainz the young Rhinelander saw the French Revolution at close quarters. Some of his acquaintances were carried away by the new gospel, but to the young aristocrat it made no appeal. " I felt that it would be the enemy I should henceforth have to combat." As Ambassador to Paris 1806-9 he was never dazzled by the victorious Emperor, whom in his heart he despised as a gambler and a parvenu, ** For me Napoleon was the Revolution incarnate, Austria the